



# New Bernal Journal

August-September 2008 • Vol. 45 • Number 4

SERVING THE BERNAL HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD OF SAN FRANCISCO SINCE 1964

## THE FOUNDATION OF ACTIVISM

# Thirty Years of BHNC!

By Joseph Smooke

Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center was born out of the national movement of the 1960s and '70s to create community based non profit organizations in urban communities to address issues of poverty, "juvenile delinquency," and urban flight and disinvestment. These non-profit organizations, Community Development Corporations (CDCs), started from community based activism and the commitment of individuals who chose to stay and organize their communities, rather than retreat to the suburbs.

Particularly active during the '60s, San Francisco's Redevelopment Agency studied parts of Bernal Heights with an eye toward creating another Redevelopment Project Area, similar to those in the Western Addition and South of Market that had caused "urban removal." A number of active Block Clubs in Bernal Heights coalesced as the Bernal Heights Association and fought off the Redevelopment Agency. In a turnabout of economic destiny in the mid 1970s, the areas of Bernal Heights that the Redevelopment Agency had thought of as "blighted" experienced a stunning increase in the price of homes and properties. Speculating developers bought up lots along the northwest part of Bernal Heights on and around Elsie Street, and proposed large, expensive developments for the hilltop.

To counteract this profiteering, nearly five hundred residents got together to control development in order to preserve the ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity of Bernal Heights. These development controls were codified in the Elsie Street Plan that then became the founda-

tion for San Francisco's first Special Use District adopted by the Planning Department. This plan established formal, permanent development controls. According to Barbara Bagot-Lopez, the Elsie Street Plan was "a revolutionary idea at the time" and considered by some to be so outrageous that the San Francisco Examiner called Bernal Heights activists "Secessionists."

The Elsie Street Plan also recommended that the community do more than just react to for-profit development; it should also proactively create non-profit developments, such as affordable housing, and build a base of support for those with less economic advan-

tage. Looking to the growing Community Development Corporation movement, the visionaries behind the Elsie Street Plan created Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center as a membership-based non-profit organization to empower the community and to provide long term solutions to the deeply rooted issues of divisions of poverty, race, and class.

This was also a period of district elections for supervisors in San Francisco. With district elections came a citywide effort for community based meetings to set issues through a network of Community Congresses that would then come together into a Citywide Congress and establish a progressive people's agenda for the supervisors to address. District elections ended with the killings of Supervisor Harvey Milk

**For the three decades  
BHNC has been in  
existence, our  
foundation has been  
our activism.**

**As an organization,  
we have never shied  
away from the tough  
challenges.**

## ALIOTO-PIER, SENIORS TURN OUT FOR ST. LUKE'S



Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier, pictured here with activists from BHNC's Senior Program, appeared at a community forum at the Cesar Chavez Elementary School to provide testimony to the Blue Ribbon Panel considering the future of St. Luke's Hospital. The Panel ultimately recommended to the Board of Directors of California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC), which owns St. Luke's Hospital, that it should remain open as a full-service community hospital that can serve the people of the southern portion of the city for generations to come. Alioto-Pier, who was instrumental in convening the Blue Ribbon Panel, advised CPMC officials that they would be wise to recognize how much community support there is for St. Luke's Hospital and to build a new hospital that meets all of the Panel's recommendations and the community's needs.

and Mayor George Moscone, and were not reinstated until 2000. The only Community Congress that survived this political trauma was the one BHNC still carries on to this day as a venue for providing our community with a voice, for bringing City Hall to the community, for providing democratic access to the election of BHNC's Board of Directors, and for tackling the most critical issues affecting our community.

For the three decades BHNC has been in existence, our foundation has been our activism, and our mission has remained ambitious: "to preserve and enhance the ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity of Bernal Heights and surrounding neighborhoods. We promote community action to build a just and equitable community

for all." As an organization, we have never shied away from the tough challenges. We have overcome adversity to develop hundreds of units of affordable housing. We have defeated a citywide ballot measure intended to stop our Market Heights development that now heroically rises on the hillside above the Alemany Farmers Market. We have taken on the challenges of providing direct supportive services to Seniors—including those who are most frail—so they can remain in the community, and to our Youth—including those who have been involved in the Juvenile Justice System—to ensure they have support for completing school, and becoming employable and employed.

Our work has expanded geographically, starting in the early 1990s as our Organizing, Youth and Senior Services, and Housing Development became active in the Excelsior, with our housing being located also in the Portola, Sunnyside, Western Addition, Mission, and Rich-

continued on page 2

## NBJ EN ESPAÑOL

# La Fundación del Activismo: Treinta Años de BHNC!

Por Joseph Smooke

El Centro Vecindario de Bernal Heights nació del movimiento nacional de los 60 y 70 para crear organizaciones sin fin de lucro basados en la comunidad en centros urbanos. BHNC fue diseñado para enfrentar problemas de pobreza, crimen juvenil, y la desinversión urbana. Estas organizaciones, Centros de Desarrollo Comunitario (CDCs) consiguieron su fuerza del activismo de la comunidad y de la dedicación de los individuos que eligieron quedarse a organizar en su comunidad en lugar de mudarse a las afueras de la ciudad.

Particularmente activa durante los años 60, la Agencia de Re-desarrollo de San Francisco estudió partes de Bernal Heights con la vision de crear otra área de re-desarrollo parecida al Western Addition y South of Market que resultaron en el desplazamiento de una gran parte de su población. Para luchar contra los planes de la Agencia de Re-desarrollo, varios clubes de cuadra se unieron para formar la Asociación de Bernal Heights. En un cambio de destino eco-

continua a página 12

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**Bernal Heights  
Neighborhood Center.**  
It is dedicated to providing the  
people of Bernal Heights with their  
community's news, ideas, issues,  
and events which support the  
center's mission:

Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center  
works to preserve and enhance  
the ethnic, cultural, and economic  
diversity of Bernal Heights and  
surrounding neighborhoods.

We promote community action to  
build a just and equitable community  
for all. BHNC focuses on the needs  
of people with low and moderate  
incomes.

We work to accomplish our  
mission by:

- Developing affordable housing throughout San Francisco;
- Providing linguistically and culturally responsive services to our community's most vulnerable adults, seniors, youth, and their families;
- Developing leaders; organizing and empowering our tenants, clients, members, and allies to advocate for their needs and for the needs of the community.

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Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center

## COVER STORY

### 30th Anniversary

continued from page 1

mond neighborhoods. This expansion has been a part of BHNC for half of our history, and developed in response to affordable housing being a citywide issue with sites for development being incredibly limited, and in response to the lack of resources for our youth and seniors in the Excelsior and Outer Mission areas.

In 2007, as we approached our 30th Anniversary, we created a new, comprehensive Strategic Plan to reconcile the issues inherently raised by expanding services and activities beyond the original boundaries of Bernal Heights. How does providing services outside Bernal impact our ability to work in Bernal Heights? And how does that impact our governance as a membership-based and member-led organization? Providing direct services alone does not have an impact on the diversity or ability to promote community action, so our Strategic Plan also reconciles the inherent tensions that arise when an organization provides direct supportive services while maintaining a mission to preserve and enhance diversity and to promote community action.

As we look to our past and current successes, and the challenges that lie before us, we must acknowledge that, in the past decade, so many Community Development Corporations throughout the country have either gone out of business

**The recognition and  
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community for decades  
to come.**

or have become so distracted by real estate development activities that they literally have forgotten what it means to have been born from community activism, and that the linkage between the organization itself and the community is essential. BHNC is unique in the fact that we continue our Community Congress, in the fact that we continue to be membership based and that our Board of Directors is elected from our membership, and in the fact that thirty years after our creation we have recommitted in our Strategic Plan to put all of our organizational effort into ensuring that BHNC will be led by our core constituency. BHNC is not only unique locally, but nationally, and we are proud to have been recognized for this work by Bank of America's national Neighborhood Excellence Initiative and other national awards over the years.

Although the national recognition we have received is important and validating, the recognition and support we receive from all of you is what will sustain BHNC as an integral part of our community for decades to come. We hope you will celebrate with us on October 4 at our 30th Anniversary celebration, and on October 19 at our 30th Anniversary edition of Fiesta on the Hill. If you want the full text of our Strategic Plan, it is easy to access on the web at [www.bhnc.org/about](http://www.bhnc.org/about). If you would like a copy mailed to you, please contact Joseph Smooke at 206-2140, ext 157. ■

## BHNC TO HONOR ANNIVERSARY AWARD RECIPIENTS

By L. Tyler

On October 4, 2008, at its thirtieth anniversary celebration, Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center will present awards to supporters of BHNC's mission: Tom Ammiano, Supervisor of District 9; the Alemany Farm organizers and volunteers; and Alejandro Galo who has worked as BHNC's custodian for twenty-four years.

Tom Ammiano, also a resident of Bernal, appreciates that it is "real neighborhood with a social conscience," and values organizations like BHNC, which he views as a "very important focal point for community dialogue." In an interview, Ammiano said he was very honored to receive the BHNC award and joked that he was proud to have lived long enough to see the progress BHNC has made. For his presumed next role as State Assemblyman, he plans to continue being a pioneer for issues of housing, land use, education and health.

Since its inception in 1995, the goals of the Alemany Farm include the creation of ecological development and fresh food for Alemany residents, the construction of resources owned and controlled by the people of the community, and environmental education. Originally a vacant lot, the farm has changed dramatically, said Jason Mark, the farm manager since 2005. With the ongoing transformation of the land, more volunteers have come to the farm. "The community comes before the garden," noted Mark, and the community is expanding rapidly. In regards to the award, Alemany Farm is "so pleased that BHNC is recognizing all the work of the Alemany residents and volunteers...[it is] really an honor," said Mark.

Alejandro Galo has worked diligently for BHNC since 1984, the longest serving staff member. Galo first came to the U.S. from Nicaragua in 1980, and started working part-time in St. Kevin's Church. Having seen BHNC expand throughout the years, Galo remembers both the purchase of a second house integrated into the neighborhood center fifteen years ago, and the original opening of the Excelsior Teen Center. When asked what motivated him to work for BHNC for so long, he answered, "I fell in love with this building and with BHNC's caring staff." In addition to the work he does for BHNC, Galo also has a theology degree from Berkeley and teaches theology seminars in Spanish.

We hope you will join us on October 4, 2008, for our thirtieth anniversary celebration and help honor these amazing members of our community! ■



Supervisor Tom Ammiano with Alemany residents at the opening of their new computer center



Making compost at the Alemany Farm



Alejandro Galo

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BHNC PROGRAMS

YOUTH

# Teen Center Celebrates Grand Reopening



The new mural adorning the reopened Excelsior Teen Center

By Faith Kirkpatrick and Danyelle Caruthers

On Friday June 13, 2008, supporters of the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center's (BHNC) Excelsior Teen Center (ETC) celebrated the recent purchase of the building by BHNC's Housing Services Affiliate (HSA). Starting at 3pm, youth and various community members gathered to socialize and enjoy the new space, including the festive new mural representing the neighborhood that youth and staff had spent weeks in advance planning and painting.

After, Supervisor Gerardo Sandoval, a long time supporter of the important community work being done at the ETC, spoke, followed by speeches from Director of Youth Services, Frederique Clermont, and BHNC Executive Director, Joseph

Smooke. Additionally, two local teens, Rondell Carroll and Marcel Wilson, were honored for their dedication to the ETC: both Carroll and Wilson had contributed a great deal of their free time to help improve the center during its renovation. Their hard work had an important impact on both the Center and the other youth.

Showcasing the importance of the Excelsior Teen Center to the youth in the community, the grand reopening also marks the beginning of a capital campaign to raise approximately \$370,000 in funds necessary to secure the purchase of the important building. If you would like to provide a donation in support, please contact Executive Director, Joseph Smooke at [jsmooke@bhnc.org](mailto:jsmooke@bhnc.org), or 206-2140, ext 157. All donations will be matched dollar for dollar by the S.H. Cowell Foundation ■

## Summer Programs

By Danyelle Caruthers and Tina Nguyen

Summer's here, and youth from the Mission, Excelsior, Bernal Heights, and Bayview have been keeping busy at the Excelsior Teen Center with activities, field trips, guest speakers, and more. More than just fun, these summer programs offered at ETC give teens valuable knowledge in job readiness, leadership and life skills.

The Teen Center kicked off the summer programming with the "WORKin' Summer" camp, designed to serve youth ages 15-17. In it, teens learned job readiness skills through an intense workshop with Job Developer Tina Nguyen and Consultant Tracey Weaver from Urban University. While learning the hard skills of job readiness—such as how to write a resume, job search techniques and work ethics—teens also incorporated Weaver's curriculum focusing more on interpersonal skills in the workplace. For their hard work in participating in the week long WORKin' Summer camp, each youth received a \$200 stipend for participating in the full 20 hours, as well as valuable tools and skills that will serve them well in the future.

In addition, those who complete "WORKin' Summer" are also eligible to participate in Summer Fun @ ETC, a seven week program that started with a pizza party orientation. Exploring our first week topic of Leadership, guest speakers from United Playaz came in and delivered motivational and useful insight for the participants. Then, at the end of the week, we traveled to Santa Clara for our field trip to Great America where participants had a great time going on rides and getting to know each other better. In the coming weeks, the group will head to the San Jose Technology Museum, UC Davis, and other great places that will show them to a range of new experiences, possibilities, and interests to which they might not have been exposed.

Summers come and go, but the experiences and skills a youth can take from ETC's summer programs can nurture them for life. ■

For more info, contact Francis Chan at (415) 334 9919, or directly at The Excelsior Teen Center: 4468 Mission Street at Excelsior.

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**BHNC PROGRAMS  
DEVELOPMENT**

**TWENTY YEARS OF FUN!**  
**Fiesta on the Hill**

By Steve Shapiro

Great community traditions—like many fine wines, strong, hearty ales, and even some of us—get better with age. This year’s Fiesta on the Hill, our twentieth annual, will take place Sunday, October 19, on Cortland Avenue. And we have

**The Fiesta spirit returns to  
Bernal October 19!**

every expectation that this year’s Fiesta will be a party to remember!

Fiesta is always a great time out not only for Bernal Heights residents, but for friends and visitors from all of Bernal’s surrounding neighborhoods, other parts of the city, and across the Bay Area. The quality and diversity of our entertainment, the food, the games, the arts and crafts, and the usually fine weather attracts huge crowds every year. It’s a big street fair with a decidedly small village feel to it.

It takes roughly 200 volunteers to organize and produce Fiesta, and even now volunteer committees are beginning the work of soliciting and selecting the entertainment. Soon volunteers will be doing outreach, spreading the word citywide about how Fiesta is the best way to spend a Sunday in October.

More than 100 volunteers will work on the day of Fiesta: closing the street; setting up booths; helping vendors load-in; assisting neighbors with any Fiesta-related problems; passing out programs and selling raffle tickets; informing festi-valgoers about our No Alcohol Policy; serve food; support the musicians—they do almost anything you can think of to assure everyone has a safe and fun day on Cortland.

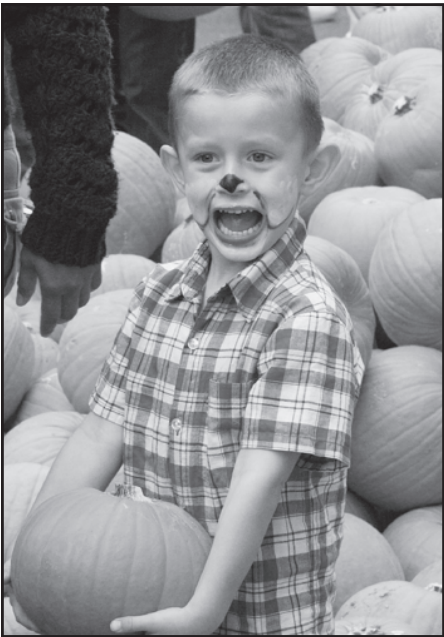
If you’re interested, email Douglas Kolberg, [douglaskolberg1@comcast.net](mailto:douglaskolberg1@comcast.net), and tell him that you’re ready, willing, and able, to pitch in as a volunteer to help make this the best Fiesta yet. We’ll need you prior to and on the day of Fiesta. Not only do you get to take in the atmosphere and great music while helping your community, but you’ll also get free lunch on the day of Fiesta as well as a free Fiesta t-shirt!

This is a great opportunity for local businesses to be recognized for their community involvement by sponsoring Fiesta. We have sponsorship packages for all budgets. If you’d like to support BHNC with a Fiesta sponsorship, contact Katixa Aboitiz at [kaboitiz@bhnc.org](mailto:kaboitiz@bhnc.org) or 206-2140 x 148. And, finally, we now are accepting vendor applications. If you’d like to have a booth or table at Fiesta contact [steven@sresproductions.com](mailto:steven@sresproductions.com) or call 415-456-6455.

See you all on the Avenue! ■



Dancers with Sila and the Afrofunk Experience at last year’s Fiesta



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BHNC PROGRAMS  
HOUSING

DOLORES HOTEL TO GET  
NEW LEASE ON LIFE

By Kevin Kitchingham

With the economy slowing, and homelessness again on the rise, the City is turning to local non-profits for help. In late April, the Housing Services Affiliate of the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center (HSA), in partnership with Dolores Street Community Services (DSCS) and the Mission Neighborhood Resource Center (MNRC), submitted a proposal to the San Francisco Mayor’s Office of Housing for construction rehabilitation of the Dolores Hotel, an abandoned 59 unit SRO (Single Room Occupancy) building deep in heart of the Mission. The development entails complete renovation of a four-story 1907 apartment building which will become the home for Latino males of the Mission District transitioning out of the shelter system. This supportive housing project, slated to open in July of 2009, will feature intensive, culturally competent support services, professional case management, and integrated property management, all of which will serve a population with specialized medical, social, and cultural needs.

Last month, the team was delighted to find out they’d been awarded the project, which will further the shared goal of the City and local non-profits to abolish chronic homelessness. “Bernal and DSCS are taking a blighted, abandoned building and creating a source of affordable housing for some of our community’s most disenfranchised members. This

project will provide stability to homeless day laborers and create a community center for health provision and supportive services,” says long-time neighborhood leader and activist Eric Quezada. Dolores Street Community Services, co-developer for the project, operates shelters for homeless Latino males in the Mission, and Quezada, the Executive Director of DSCS, sees this project as a synergistic opportunity for like minded organizations to pool their resources to effect

A blighted, abandoned building gets another chance, as will its new occupants.

change, “The collaboration and initiative on this project point to a creative way of developing affordable housing and sharing expertise and resources to create affordable housing in difficult times.”

A key component of such supportive housing projects is the provision and delivery of “wrap-around” health services to the tenants living at the Dolores Hotel. The service provider for this project, Mission Neighborhood Resource Center, also owns and operates the Mission Neighborhood Health Center (MNHC). Since 1988,



(Almost) pictured above: The Dolores Hotel

they have provided not only medical services to the Mission District’s homeless population, but shelter reservations, peer counseling, intensive case management, dual diagnosis counseling, harm reduction support groups, and community building. Their expertise in the field will keep the target population for this building healthy and housed.

“The Dolores Hotel provides the opportunity for us to continue these services and create a continuum of housing options for residents leaving the shelter system, ensuring that they don’t end up

back on the street,” says Laura Guzman, Director of MNRC.

As Quezada points out, “We’ve worked to implement a vision for alternative housing options for shelter residents, and the Dolores Hotel will bring that vision to fulfillment. It will be a unique opportunity to house immigrants and day laborers, and provide supportive services to an often neglected population.” An exciting new venture for this dynamic team, the Dolores Hotel project is currently in the pre-development stage and will swing into construction by the end of the Summer. ■

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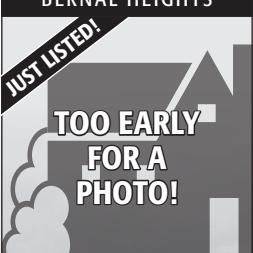
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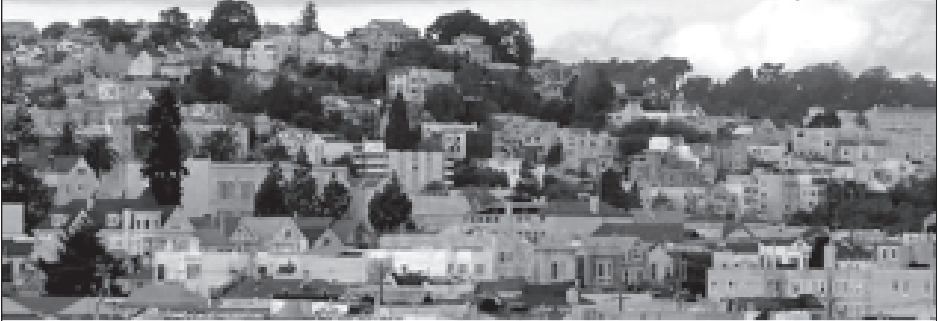
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# THE PRIDE OF JUNE

## BHNC and Openhouse!

By Roxie Kellam

Bernal Heights LGBT neighbors participated in the many events all around the city celebrating LGBT Pride, and the late May news of the historic California Supreme Court decision on marriage equality set the tone for our Pride Celebrations this year. Many of us never thought that we would be able to “get” married in our lifetime!

Decked out with Pride posters, flags, and colorful streamers for the month of June, Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center hosted the All Age Community Meeting and their Pride Potluck on June 10. The meeting’s highlight was a program focusing on the health care insurance options and issues we all face as we age, and the Health Insurance Counseling Assistance Program (HICAP) Outreach Coordinator, Jennie Chavez, was in attendance to talk about their service: What does HICAP do, and where can we go for help with our health insurance problems or counseling? With over ten locations in San Francisco, HICAP offers a place where seniors can go for free health insurance counseling. A free service, HICAP is sponsored by the State of California and run locally by a small but dedicated staff and volunteers.

Our LGBT seniors had a lot of questions, and Jennie provided strong, clear answers. And, as a result of our meeting, the staffs of HICAP and BHNC are negotiating to come up with a regular monthly time to make appointments with the HICAP, available for all seniors, directly

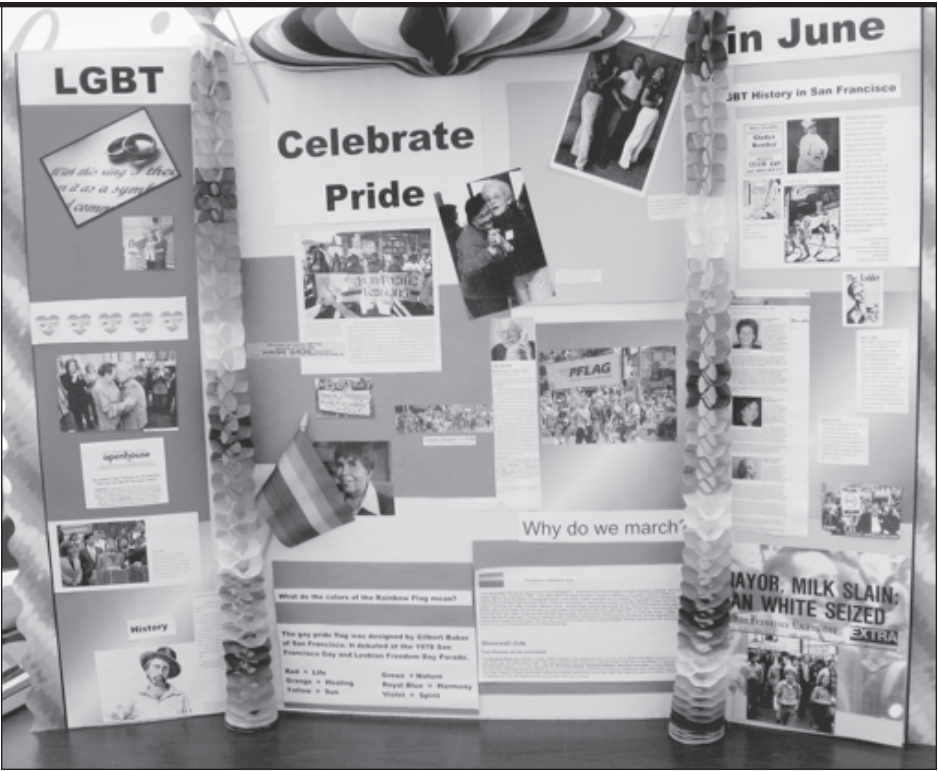
at Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center. Having HICAP counseling services directly at BHNC is a very exciting development – you won’t have to go downtown or out to Stonestown to receive HICAP counseling!

As for the rest of Pride, Openhouse was a co-presenter at two of the LGBT Film Festival film screenings—“Another Ten Good Years”, “A Gay Old Time”, and

### Out and about with Openhouse and LGBT Seniors during our month of Pride.

“Felicia”—and Openhouse volunteers and staff were featured in two of the documentaries. On Pride Sunday (June 29), Openhouse and Lavender Seniors of the East Bay collaborated at the Pride Celebration after the Parade – to host the Elder’s Tent. Many of Bernal Heights LGBT seniors came by to see the Lavender Scrolls created by the LSEB and photographs of our city seniors, and to talk about housing and other services offered by both active LGBT senior programs. Thank you for dropping by! Be sure to see us at the Elder’s Tent next year!

What’s next at the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center and The All Age LGBT Community Meetings? We contin-



ue to meet, with dates moving around due to available programming and space/scheduling needs. On July 30, BHNC-Senior Services will sponsor the first meeting for a family caregiving support group, and on August 5, the All Age LGBT will have a panel and discussion on the new marriage equality law: what does it mean for LGBT couples, and should you get married? What’s the difference between the California Domestic Partnership Law and the new Marriage Equality Law? What happens if Proposition 8 passes? Should seniors get married if one or both of you have significant health issues? It promises to be a fascinating meeting, and I hope to see you there!

Also, BHNC-Senior Services and Openhouse will be out and about at the Bernal Heights Film Festival screenings during August, the Garage Sale on the Hill on August 16, and Fiesta on the Hill

in October 19. See you at Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center this summer! ■

*Roxie Kellam is the Education and Outreach Coordinator for Openhouse, a San Francisco non-profit working to bring dignity in aging to LGBT seniors through affordable senior housing, community based supportive services, and LGBT cultural competency trainings for mainstream social service agencies. We have been awarded grants to provide technical assistance to senior centers and their surrounding communities in San Francisco to bring LGBT programming and welcoming atmosphere to San Francisco Senior Centers in the spirit of the diversity of all who live in San Francisco. Openhouse is working with the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center—Senior Services to achieve these goals. For more information, contact Roxie@openhouse-sf.org.*



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SABRINA DAVIDSON

## Antoinette

Youth and teen activist

### Why is violence prevention so important to you?

Working in my community to prevent violence is important to me because I know a lot of people on the streets, and I know that shooting can be happening at any time. Violence has no name: it is scary because anyone in our community can be affected by violence and killed at any time. Violence brings my community down and starts a lot of more violence. People want to kill the person that first killed. It is a cycle.

### How has BHNC helped you grow as a leader to address this issue?

First, BHNC and the Excelsior Teen Center got me off the streets, helped me to be safe, and learn what is right and wrong. They have staff to talk to and tell us what we could do. This place helps me because it is a place to learn what to do with our lives instead of being out on the streets. Also, BHNC showed me how to speak out against violence. We worked together on staging a peace march in the community which I also spoke at.



SABRINA DAVIDSON

## Evan

Youth and Mayor's Youth Employment and Education Program (MYEEP) worker

### Why is violence prevention important to you?

Stopping violence is important to me because mainly I know a lot of people that have been close friends that have been hurt by violence. I think it is wrong and sad-denying to see people kill each other, especially kids at a young age that that are killed and are not able to live life to the fullest.

### How has BHNC helped you become a stronger leader and address these issues?

BHNC helped me to become a stronger leader by employing me as a MYEEP worker. In this position, I have a summer job and I don't have to be hanging out on the streets. As a MYEEP worker, I can come here to help youth stay safe. I have gotten a lot of experience in dealing with conflict and a lot of tools on how to settle problems in a cool way rather than using violence. Working with my peers, I am an example to the other kids in the community and at the Excelsior Teen Center.



SABRINA DAVIDSON

## Tony

Youth

### Why is stopping violence in the neighborhood so important to you?

I have seen a lot of violence with kids and adults. Kids need something else than the streets. If me or kids like me did not have this Center, we would be just hanging out, waiting.

### How has BHNC supported you to become a leader to stop violence in your community?

Being involved with the Bernal Heights Excelsior Teen Center has taught me that I don't have to be a follower and do everything everyone else does or thinks is cool. I don't have to carry weapons or copy anyone to be cool. Everyone can be cool and just get along and be themselves. The Teen Center showed me another way instead of violence.

# The Faces of Leadership

Every community has its leaders. For Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center's 30th Anniversary, we asked the leaders of Bernal (old and new) about the issues important to them, and how BHNC has helped them lead the way.



KIMBERLY ALABRECHA

## Georgia Willette

Member and Alemany activist

### Why is rebuilding Alemany Public Housing so important to you?

Because it is overdue. Most of Alemany is unfit to live in. It has been neglected for too long and it has deteriorated inside and outside. It is not good for the community's health to live there. Residents deserve to live in a decent and safe environment. Alemany needs to be rebuilt. Also, it doesn't feel like part of this community because it is so segregated and hard to get to and from. It needs to be integrated into Bernal Heights.

### How has BHNC helped you develop as a leader regarding this issue?

BHNC has developed our leadership by working with us to go to City Hall to advocate for change in our community. We are involved in every step of the conversations about maybe rebuilding Alemany. BHNC explains to us the process and then asks what we want to do. We work together.



KIMBERLY ALABRECHA

## Rufina Quijano

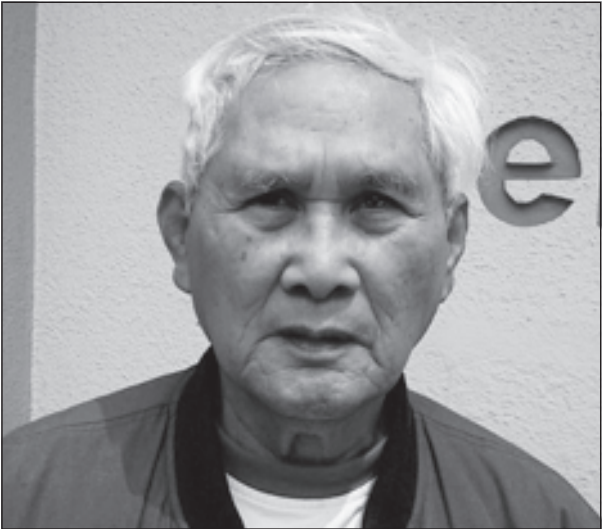
Member and senior client

### Why is saving St. Luke's Hospital so important to you?

I depend on St. Luke's Hospital for all of my medical needs. My doctor, my laboratory tests and my physical therapy were all at St. Luke's Hospital. Now they send me far away for my physical therapy and I don't know why. If St. Luke's Hospital closes, it would be so hard for me to go somewhere else. I don't even know of another hospital in the area. So many of my neighbors and friends at the Bernal Heights Senior Program also use St. Luke's Hospital.

### How has BHNC helped you develop as a leader regarding this issue?

BHNC has helped us to communicate with the city officials. They explained to us why CPMC/Sutter wants to close the hospital, so that we understand. They have provided transportation for us to go to speak to City Hall. I have gone to City Hall three times and to the community input meeting once. I will continue to go!



KIMBERLY ALABRECHA

## Telesforo Unite

Member and senior client

### Why is saving St. Luke's Hospital so important to you?

Because St. Luke's Hospital was built with a mission to help low-income people, and it must stay open for the community. It is the only hospital from Cesar Chavez Street to the top of the hill in Daly City. We have many low-income homebound seniors that live in Bernal Heights and surrounding neighborhoods that depend on St. Luke's Hospital every day.

### How has BHNC supported you in your work/leadership to on this issue?

As a client of the senior program, I have gotten education about what is happening at St. Luke's. BHNC has also provided transportation for me and other seniors to go community meetings and talk about why St. Luke's Hospital is so important to us and the rest of the community. It is hard for seniors to get around and transportation is important for us. BHNC has also helped me speak directly to St. Luke's representatives about my concerns.





MARK JOHANN

## Darcy Lee

Owner, Heartfelt

### What larger goal do you hope to achieve with your business and the community?

My mission statement is to provide cool stuff for reasonable prices. But I think that more importantly, my goal is to meet a need within a community, and that can be a social need and a “stuff” need. I want to meet a social need—I really want to be there for the old ladies that I listen to, and listen to their stories—but also I love the idea that I have something for everyone.

### How is BHNC helping you achieve that goal?

I think that BHNC helps me immeasurably in terms of directing me in ways that I can help the community, focusing on what their needs are. I think we’ve all latched onto a charity when we find an area we really love helping, and I love helping Frederique with the toy drive because it’s right up my alley, and hopefully we’re providing better toys, and last year we raised money when the City was having difficulty providing for her. So the Center helps sort through our opportunities and show us how we can help a community in need within our community. I think it’s a great tool for all of us.



JEFF LESTER

## Ken Shelf

Owner, Four Star Video

### What larger goal do you hope to achieve with your business and the community?

Bernal Heights is a special community, an almost “old-fashioned” neighborhood. In a world where chain corporations in strip malls rule, Bernal Heights has managed to keep a distinct local flavor. My hope for Bernal Heights businesses is longevity and autonomy. To that end, Four Star Video has been serving the movie and television watching community for 22 years, and I hope it will be around to serve the people of Bernal Heights long into the future.

### How is BHNC helping you achieve that goal?

Everything BHNC does to insure diversity in Bernal Heights, regarding ethnicity, age and socio-economics, benefits all of us. It benefits my family as residents of Bernal Heights and it benefits our store as a center for communication and entertainment.



JEFF LESTER

## Lester Zeidman

President, Good Life Grocery

### What are your hopes for the Bernal Business Association (BBA)? What do you think it will mean for Bernal Heights?

I would like to promote neighborhood-serving businesses. I believe that with the economy tanking and energy prices rising, that people will have more incentive to eat, shop and work near where they live without having to drive to do any one of those things. There are so many exciting things going on in Bernal Heights and a successful business organization can capture and promote those activities. We all derive incomes from some sort of business pursuit and those are the stories that are most interesting. People want to share their stories and maybe the BBA can be such an outlet.

### What help has BHNC provided you for your goals in Bernal Heights?

If it wasn’t for Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center, I’d have never opened this store back in ’91. They were instrumental in getting me here and helping me get through the process. It was pretty exciting when we did it. How the store has evolved in that time has been pretty amazing.

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## SABRINA DAVIDSON JOINS BHNC

### Activist Has Texas Roots, California Heart

By Kim Alvarenga

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Sabrina Davidson, our new Community Development Coordinator at Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center. Sabrina will be working alongside BHNC leaders; providing support to residents of public housing and BHNC-owned housing.

Originally from southeast Texas, Sabrina comes from a lineage of great women—her grandmother, grandfather, mother, and aunts—who are her role models ancestrally originating from the Tonkawan Nation. Locally, Sabrina has been blessed to look up to and organize with great activists such as Kiilu Nyasha, Alice Walker, and Mesha Irazzary. Starting off as a youth organizer bringing awareness around community violence and police accountability in the Bayview Hunterspoint and District 10, Sabrina currently works with friends and comrades around issues of environmental justice and food security. In addition to her work with Bernal Heights leaders, Sabrina organizes community gardens with local homeowners, tenants, and bio-remediation group, The Mycelium Gardening Project.

If you want to organize with Sabrina and other Bernal leaders, come on by BHNC! You can reach Sabrina at [Sdavidson@bhnc.org](mailto:Sdavidson@bhnc.org) or 415-206-2140, ext. 155. ■

Peter Rothblatt

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## New Business Association For Bernal

By Jeff Lester

A force in the community for years, The Cortland Merchants' Association has not only offered a forum for local merchants to share problems and solutions, it has helped shape the character of Cortland Avenue itself, helping define and retain the unique flavor of Bernal Heights that continues to make it one of the most desirable neighborhoods in San Francisco.

Now, in an ambitious restructuring of the group's purpose, the Cortland Merchants' Association is on the threshold of expanding its purview by reforming as the Bernal Business Association.

"There have always been a lot of real estate agents that came to our meetings and wanted to join, but our bylaws restrict our membership to businesses on

Cortland," says Interim President Darcy Lee. "And once we started thinking about it—not just about the real estate agents, but also about the restaurants and some of the issues the little stores around Crescent are going through—we thought, 'Why *should* we be restricted?'"

"We wanted to be more inclusive to the larger Bernal Heights business community," agrees Treasurer Lester Zeidman. "And we felt we would be a better, stronger organization with more members. I think that various merchants can learn more from different kinds of businesses, and the needs of one side of Bernal Heights are not always the same as the other side. If we can correlate those interests and present them in a broader context with support from all over Ber-

nal, we can make Bernal Heights a more effective presence in SF as a whole."

"I would like to promote neighborhood-serving businesses," Zeidman adds. "I believe that with the economy tanking and energy prices rising, people will have more incentive to eat, shop and work near where they live without having to drive. There are so many exciting things going on in Bernal Heights; a successful business organization can capture and promote those activities."

In additon to expanding the scope beyond Cortland, the BBA is considering opening up the definition of a business—self-employed professionals working from home would be eligible to join the BBA, and Lee encourages them to do so. To that end, the BBA has thought about how to have an organization that would encourage their involvement. "Honestly,"

says Lee. "It's hard to get people to come to meetings once a month, when everyone's so busy, and we have kids and stuff. We thought we'd change the whole structure of the organization so there's a board that meets once a month and then the members would perhaps be a larger group, but wouldn't have to come to monthly meetings. We think that would make it easier for professional writers, graphic designers—all those people who live and work throughout Bernal—to join and have a say in what happens in our neighborhood."

"We all derive incomes from some sort of business," Zeidman adds. "People want an outlet to share their business stories and maybe the BBA can be such an outlet." ■

For more information, contact Darcy Lee at [info@heartfeltsf.com](mailto:info@heartfeltsf.com).

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# New Bernal Journal en Español

## COVER STORY

### 30 Años de BHNC!

continua de página 1

nómico a mediados de los 70, las áreas de Bernal Heights que la Agencia de Re-desarrollo determinaba como deterioradas vieron un muy fuerte aumento en el valor de hogares y propiedades. Desarrolladores inmobiliarios especulativos compraron terrenos en la parte Noroeste de Bernal Heights, en y alrededor de Elsie Street y propusieron desarrollos grandes y caros para la cima de la colina. Para contrarrestar estas construcciones, casi 500 residentes se unieron para controlar el desarrollo para preservar la diversidad étnica, cultural y económica de Bernal Heights. Estos controles de desarrollo fueron codificados en el Plan de la Calle Elsie que después de convirtieron en la fundación del primer Distrito de Uso Oficial de San Francisco adoptado por el Departamento de Planificación. Este plan estableció controles de desarrollo formales y permanentes. Barbara Bagot-Lopez dijo que el Plan de la Calle Elsie fue “una idea revolucionaria para el tiempo” y fue considerado tan extremo que el *San Francisco Examiner* calificó a los activistas de Bernal Heights como “Secesionistas.” El Plan de la Calle Elsie también recomendó que la comunidad haga más que simplemente reaccionar a los desarrollos de lujo, que también debe crear viviendas sin fin de lucro, cómo viviendas económicas, y construir una base de apoyo para aquellos con menos ventajas económicas. Usando como ejemplo al movimiento de creación de Centros de Desarrollo Comunitario, los visionarios detras del Plan de Calle Elsie crearon el Centro Vecindario de Bernal Heights. Su idea fue crear un organización sin fin de lucro guiada por sus miembros para empoderar a

### Por las tres décadas del trabajo de BHNC, nuestra fundación ha sido el activismo.

la comunidad y proveer soluciones a largo plazo a los problemas de pobreza, y division racial y de clase. Este también fue un periodo de elecciones de distrito para los Supervisors en San Francisco. Con las elecciones también vino el esfuerzo de la ciudad entera para crear reuniones comunitarias para establecer temas de importancia a ser tratados a traves de una red de congresos comunitarios que culminarían en un congreso de la ciudad para establecer una agenda progresiva para los Supervisores. Las elecciones terminaron con los asesinatos del Supervisor Harvey Milk y el Alcalde George Moscone, y no fueron reinstauradas hasta el 2000. El único Congreso Comunitario que sobrevivió el trauma político fue el de BHNC que continúa hasta hoy en día como un espacio para proveer a la comunidad con una voz, para que los oficiales electos se comuniquen con la comunidad, para proveer un acceso democrático a las elecciones de la junta directiva de BHNC, y para tratar los temas que más afectan a nuestra comunidad. Por las tres décadas del trabajo de BHNC, nuestra fundación ha sido el activismo, y nuestra misión sigue siendo ambiciosa: “preservar y promover la diversidad étnica, cultural y económica de Bernal Heights y los barrios cercanos. Nosotros promovemos ac-

ción comunitaria para construir una sociedad justa y egalitaria para todos.” Como organización nunca hemos huido de un desafío. Hemos superado adversidades en la construcción de cientos de unidades de viviendas económicas. Hemos derrotado una propuesta electoral diseñada para frenar nuestro desarrollo de Market Heights que ahora heroicamente esta en la colina sobre el Mercado de Agricultores de Alemany. Hemos asumido el desafío de proveer servicios directos para nuestros mayores—incluyendo a los más frágiles—para que puedan permanecer en nuestra comunidad, y para nuestros jóvenes—incluyendo a aquellos que han estado involucrados con el Sistema de Justicia Juvenil—para asegurar que tengan el apoyo necesario para terminar el secundario y para que tengan las habilidades necesarias para conseguir un trabajo. Nuestro trabajo se ha expandido geograficamente, comenzando en los años 90 hemos estado activos no solo en el Excelsior sino que también en los barrios de Portola, Western Addition, Mission, y Richmond. Esta expansión ha sido parte de BHNC por la mitad de su historia, y pasó porque viviendas económicas son un tema importante pa-

ra la ciudad entera: sitios para su desarrollo estan increíblemente limitados, y la falta de recursos para jóvenes y mayores crearon la necesidad de acción de la parte de BHNC. En 2007, mientras nos acercábamos a nuestro 30° aniversario, creamos un nuevo Plan Estratégico para reconciliar las preguntas que resultaron de la expansión de nuestros servicios y actividades más allá de Bernal Heights. Como es que la provision de servicios directos más alla de Bernal afecta nuestra habilidad de proveer servicios en Bernal? Y como afecta nuestro gobierno como una organización basada en y dirigida por nuestros miembros? La provisión de servicios directos en sí no afecta la diversidad o habilidad de promover acción comunitaria, por ende nuestro Plan Estratégico re-

concilia las tensiones que resultan cuando una organización provee servicios directos mientras que su misión es preservar y promover la diversidad y promover acción comunitaria. Mientras que miramos hacia atras, y pensamos en nuestros éxitos y las dificultades que vamos a tener que afrontar, tenemos que reconocer que, en las décadas pasadas, muchos Centros de Desarrollo Comunitario han dejado de existir o se han distraido tanto por el desarrollo inmobiliario que se han olvidado del significado de haber nacido de la acción comunitaria, y que la relación entre la organización de comunidades y la comunidad en si es esencial. BHNC es único en el sentido de que continuamos nuestro Congreso Comunitario, en que seguimos estando basados en nuestros miembros y en que nuestra junta directiva es elegida por nuestros miembros, y en que después de treinta años hemos repetido nuestra dedicación en nuestro Plan Estratégico para poner toda nuestra fuerza organizacional en asegurar que BHNC va a ser dirigido por nuestros miembros, clientes y circunscripción. BHNC es único localmente y nacionalmente, y estamos orgullosos de haber sido reconocidos por nuestro trabajo por la Iniciativa Nacional de Excelencia de Barrios del Banco de América y otros premios nacionales durante los años.

Aunque el reconocimiento nacional que hemos recibido es importante, el reconocimiento y apoyo que recibimos de ustedes es lo que va a sostener a BHNC como una parte integral de nuestra comunidad en los años por venir. Esperamos poder celebrar con ustedes nuestro aniversario el 4 de octubre y una Fiesta en la Calle edición aniversario el 19 de octubre. Si quiere recibir una copia de nuestro Plan Estratégico, puede accederlo facilmente en la web en [www.bhnc.org/about](http://www.bhnc.org/about). Si quiere que le mandemos una copia por correo por favor pongase en contact con Joseph Smooke al 206-2140, ext 157. ■

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GRAN RE-APERTURA DEL CENTRO JUVENIL

Por Faith Kirkpatrick y Danyelle Caruthers

El viernes 13 de junio del 2008, los patrocinadores del Centro del Vecindario de Bernal Heights (BHNC) y el Centro Juvenil de Virutas (ETC) celebraron la reciente adquisición del edificio Servicios de Vivienda Afiliados (HSA), de BHNC. Comenzando a las 3 de la tarde, los jóvenes y varios miembros de la comunidad se reunieron para socializar y disfrutar del nuevo espacio, y del nuevo mural festivo, que representa el vecindario en el que la juventud y el personal habían pasado varias semanas en la planificación y desarrollo de la pintura.

Después, el Supervisor Gerald Sandoval, quien ha apoyado durante mucho tiempo el importante trabajo de la comunidad que se esta haciendo en el ETC, habló, seguido por discursos del Director de Servicios Juveniles, Frederique Clermont y del Director Ejecutivo de BHNC, Joseph Smooke. Aparte, dos jóvenes locales, Rondell Carroll y Marcel Wilson, fueron reconocidos por su dedicación al ETC. Tanto Carroll como Wilson han contribuido mucho de su tiempo libre para ayudar a mejorar el centro durante su renovación. Su trabajo ha tenido un importante impacto en el Centro y en la juventud.

Representando la importancia del Centro Juvenil del Excelsior para la juventud en la comunidad, la gran re-apertura también marca el principio de una campaña para asegurar aproximadamente \$310.000 en fondos, que son necesarios para comprar este edificio tan importante. Si usted gusta proporcionar alguna donación, por favor comuníquese con el Director Ejecutivo, Joseph Smooke: jsmooke@bhnc.org, o 206-2140, ext.157. ■

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Dolores Hotel consigue un nuevo alquiler para una nueva vida

Por Kevin Kitchingham

Con la economía en recesión y con la falta de vivienda otra vez en la alta, la Ciudad acude a las organizaciones no-lucrativas para proveer ayuda. A finales de abril, los Servicios de Vivienda Afiliados al Centro del Vecindario de Bernal Heights (HSA), los Servicios de Vivienda Afiliados al Centro Comunitario de la Calle Dolores (DSCS) y el Centro de Recursos de Vecindario de la Misión (MNRC), sometieron una propuesta para la Oficina de Vivienda del Alcalde de San Francisco para la remodelación del Hotel Dolores, un SRO de 59 unidades abandonado en el corazón de la Misión. El desarrollo incluye una renovación completa de un edificio de apartamentos edificado en 1907, de cuatro niveles. Este edificio llegará a ser el hogar del Distrito de la Misión, un programa habitacional para hombres latinos en transición saliendo del sistema de refugios. Este proyecto de apoyo de vivienda, esta designado para iniciar en julio de 2009 y tendrán servicios culturalmente competentes de apoyo intensivo, servicios sociales y gestión integrada de la propiedad. Todos los servicios servirán a la población con énfasis en las necesidades médicas, sociales y culturales.

El mes pasado, el equipo estaba encantado al escuchar que les habían concedido el proyecto, que empujara aún más el objetivo compartido de la Ciudad y las organizaciones no-lucrativas para terminar con la falta crónica de vivienda. “Bernal y DCSC tomaran un edificio arruinado y abandonado y crearán una fuente de vivienda accesible para algunas personas necesitadas de nuestras comunidades. “Este proyecto proporcionará la estabilidad a jornaleros sin hogar y creará un centro comunitario para la provisión de la salud y servicios de apoyo” dijo Eric Quezada, un líder del vecindario y activista. Los Servicios Comunitarios de la Calle Dolores, el co-desarrollador del proyecto, ofrece refugios para hombres latinos sin hogar en la Misión y Quezada, el Director Ejecutivo de DSCS, ve este proyecto como una oportunidad sinérgica para que las organizaciones combinen su apoyo de recursos para así promover el cambio, “La colaboración y la iniciativa en este proyecto crea una forma creativa para desarrollar la vivienda accesible y compartir la experiencia y los recursos para crear la vivienda accesible en tiempos difíciles”.



(Casi) fotografiada arriba: Dolores Hotel

Un edificio abandonado recibe otra oportunidad, al igual que sus nuevos residentes

Un componente clave de tales proyectos de apoyo para vivienda es la provisión y la entrega de servicios de salud “comprensivos” a los arrendatarios que viven en el Hotel Dolores. El proveedor de servicios para este proyecto, el Centro del Recursos del Vecindario de la Misión, también posee y opera el Centro Médico del Vecindario de la Misión (MNHG). Desde 1988, ellos han proporcionado no sólo servicios médicos a la población sin hogar del Distrito de la Misión, sino también reservaciones de refugio, consejería, servicios sociales, consejería de diagnóstico doble, grupos de apoyo de reducción de daño, y edificación de la comunidad. Su experiencia mantendrá a la población con el objetivo para que este edificio sea un lugar sano y seguro.

“El Hotel Dolores nos proporciona la oportunidad de continuar estos servicios y crear una continuación a las opciones de residencia para los residentes en transición del sistema del refugio y asegurara que no acaben nuevamente en la calle,” dijo Laura Guzmán, Directora de MNRC.

Como Quezada indica, “hemos trabajado para implementar una visión que provea opciones de residencia alternativa para residentes de refugio y el Hotel Dolores hará realidad esa visión. Será una oportunidad extraordinaria para albergar inmigrantes y a jornaleros y proporcionar los servicios que auxilien a una población frecuentemente descuidada”. Una nueva y emocionante aventura para este dinámico equipo del Distrito 9, el proyecto del Hotel Dolores esta actualmente en la etapa de pre-desarrollo y principiaria su construcción a finales del verano. ■

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# COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

## What's Happening at the Library?



LISA DUNSETH

What once was, what shall be: this photo shows where the new stairwell will be (where the old staff office was.)

By Lisa Dunseth

The Bernal Heights Library Campaign is in full swing. A partnership of Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, our library system, and the Bernal community, the Bernal Library Campaign is funds to help complete the Bernal Library renovation. City bonds (overwhelmingly approved by San Francisco voters) pay for construction costs, and Friends of the San Francisco Public Library—with great volunteers—is raising money for furniture and equipment. For more information, to contribute and to get involved, please contact Marian Chatfield-Taylor at Friends of the SF Public Library, 626-7512 x103. ■

## OPENING WIDE

## Fifth Annual Bernal Heights Outdoor Cinema Expands to Ten Days

Moving into a full-fledged film festival mode, the annual “end-of-summer” Bernal Heights Outdoor Cinema season expands its schedule this year to include 10 days of free screenings and special events. In response to audiences wanting opportunities to see neighborhood filmmaking on more than a single weekend, the 2008 season offers more than just a few free weekend screenings in the parks.

In fact, the first weekend invites filmmakers, amateur videographers and “wannabe” producers to a 24-Hour Video Challenge: participants will organize in teams at Bernal Playground on Saturday, August 23, and proceed to produce 1-minute videos that will be screened just 24 hours later. Winning videos will be shown alongside the line-up at Holly Park the following Saturday evening.

The traditional weekend of outdoor screenings kicks off on Thursday, August 28, on the patio of El Rio with Opening Night. Then Saturday, August 30, screenings include a short afternoon showing of kid-friendly titles at Red Hill Books followed by the Holly Park screening later in the evening. Audience members are welcome to come early for live music in the park, sponsored by Friends of Holly Park, and a “Meet-the-Filmmakers” hour. The evening line-up concludes with a soapbox lecture at Bernal Bubbles with a special Bernal filmmaker to be announced.

On Sunday, August 30, preceded by a “Meet-the-Filmmakers” reception, a screening takes place under the stars in

Precita Park of of YOUTH FILMWORKS, films and videos by, for and about the next generation. Finally, the season wraps up on Sunday, September 7, with an afternoon screening plus a Q&A panel of filmmakers—open to Bernal and city-wide friends—at Zeum at the Yerba Buena Center. As in the past, all events and screenings are free to the public.

For specific times and locations, visit: [www.bhoutdoorcine.org](http://www.bhoutdoorcine.org) or telephone (415) 641-8417. ■



Neighbors came bundled up for the annual outdoor film festival



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Other Music in August:

August 1	8p	Dog Playing Poker
August 2	8p	Watson Park
August 5	8p	Sound for the Organization of Society
August 8	8p	Christy and the Low Dows
August 9	8p	Ivor Singer Song Writer
August 12	8p	Patrick Wolf
August 15	7p	BHNC Fundraiser
August 15	8p	Two Tall Drinks
August 22	8p	Go Van Goh
August 23	8p	David Alt
August 29	8p	Dave Ford
August 30	8p	The Ambassador of Trout

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COURTESY BERNAL HEIGHTS PRESERVATION ARCHIVE



LEGENDS OF THE HILL

BERNAL HEIGHTS HISTORY

By Terry Milne

This is the view southeast at the intersection of Mullen Avenue and Peralta Avenue in November, 1941. The street beyond was named Wolfe until it was cut through to connect to Mullen in the 1930s. The photo was taken in anticipation of grading for street widening and paving. The closest house at 125 Mullen was moved back for the street right-of-way.

The first block of Mullen up from Alabama Street (named Columbia Place in the 1880s) was settled by Mary Mullen. A nineteenth century pioneer on the north slope of Bernal Heights, she subdivided lots and built the first house on the street named for her.

The bare hillside of leftover rights-of-way has been transformed over the years into today’s Peralta Point Public Open Space. It sits as a memorial to Betty Kilich who worked for many years to ensure that the city preserved the lots for neighborhood benefit and beautification. The open space has slowly changed character to become gardens with a wonderful view of downtown. These days, neighborhood volunteers, instigated by Ben Molina, plant and maintain the ever-expanding landscaped area.

HOT TIME: SUMMER IN THE CITY

By Mayor Gavin Newsom

Summer is upon us and there are hundreds of reasons to turn off the television this season and discover, or rediscover, what your local park or recreation center has in store for you. Our city’s Recreation and Park Department offers an array of quality, affordable activities and programs for kids of all ages. Some of these programs are traditional ones—trusty standards like the ones you and I may have participated in when we were youngsters—while others are new, innovative programs catering to the interests of today’s youth.

If you haven’t done so in a while, I invite you to take a closer look at what Recreation and Parks has to offer this summer with this following guide and by visiting our schedules at <http://sfreconline.org>:

**Day Camps:** Our city’s day camp programs continue to be some of the most popular programs in the city year after year, offering a variety of themes from sports and the arts to cooking and nature. Other specialty camps include a science camp run by the Randall Museum and Art in the Park camp at the Sharon Art Studio in Golden Gate Park.

**Latchkey Summer Program:** Our city’s after school Latchkey program provides full-time programming for school-age children during the summer. With 13 sites throughout the city, Latchkey is one of our more popular and affordable summer programs, serving hundreds of kids per year at roughly \$20 per week. Activities include sports, arts and crafts, games, basic cooking lessons, and weekly field trips to Bay Area amusement parks.

**Aquatics:** Learning to swim at one of San Francisco’s nine public swimming pools is almost a prerequisite for city residents, and lessons are available daily, Monday through Friday. Or if your kids just want to do some recreational swimming, they can float around to their hearts’ content every day of the week.

**Sports:** What’s a summer without sports? From football and soccer to baseball and tennis, Recreation and Parks provides summer leagues, tournaments and clinics for just about every sport imaginable, for just about every playing level.

**Midnight Music:** Midnight Music is a citywide music program that provides children with the opportunity to learn how to express themselves innovatively and creatively through music. The program provides children, youth, and teens with free lessons, concerts, road shows, workshops and outings, all led by professionals in the local music industry.

**Project Insight:** Project Insight’s programs for the Deaf and visually impaired serve young people, ages 6-19, with recreation-based programs focusing on building physical, social, and living skills. Programs are conducted in American Sign Language but students of all language abilities are accepted into the programs.

**For the Entire Family: Volunteer Program** There are many opportunities for citizens to volunteer with the Recreation and Park Department. Volunteer activities include gardening and ecological restoration, leading nature walks, coaching soccer, tutoring students in after school programs, working with seniors and more. Each year, approximately 12,000 park volunteer slots are filled and 42,500 hours of physical labor are donated to the Department’s parks; 500 registered recreation volunteers contribute to a variety of athletic, art and cultural programs.

**Natural Areas:** The city has a diverse array of parks and open spaces—500 acres of which are considered Natural Areas—that are waiting to be explored. Natural Areas are remnants of San Francisco’s historic landscape and contain rich and diverse plant and animal communities that differ dramatically from one another. These communities include oak woodlands, creeks, lakes, grasslands, dunes, scrub and rock outcrops. In many cases, these nature preserves are the only places where wildlife such as the Red-tailed Hawk, Gray Fox, Great-horned Owl, and San Francisco Garter Snake still reside, reproduce and play.

**Community Gardening:** The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department also supports and manages a program of approximately 40 community gardens on City-owned property. Each garden is operated by a group of committed volunteers

who grow ornamentals and produce for personal use on personal and shared plots.

**Special Note:** The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department has implemented a new registration process for its recreation program offerings. To register for any RPD program from this point forward, you will need to create a “Family Account” that includes all members of your family. When you establish your account, it will allow for a quicker and simpler registration process in the future. Please visit the McLaren Lodge Annex, 501 Stanyan Street, between Fell and Stanyan streets, Monday through Friday, during regular business hours, with appropriate documents, to enroll in any Recreation and Park Department program. For more details on creating your family account, please call 3-1-1, or visit [www.sfreconline.org](http://www.sfreconline.org).

*For complete information on Recreation and Park Department programs, please call (415) 831-2700, or visit [www.parks.sfgov.org](http://www.parks.sfgov.org).*

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# COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

## EVOLVING BENCHMARKS:

### “Old Fashioned Stoops” Change with Community

By Elaine Elinson

Jackie and Molly, sixth graders with braces and bunny earrings, selling chocolate from a bench in front of the Good Life Grocery, probably never heard of David Ayooob.

Neither had Doug, a paint-stained contractor from Oakland, munching on a bagel and humus on the bench in front of Progressive Grounds.

Nor the homeless man in a grimy navy parka perched with his bulging black plastic shopping bags in front of the Wild Side West Saloon.

But David Ayooob probably had them all in mind when he proposed the Cortland Avenue Merchants Association invest in benches along the central artery of Bernal Heights. When Ayooob died, tragically young from a heart attack in 2006, the merchants of Cortland Avenue wanted to honor the unelected Mayor of Bernal Heights with a fitting tribute.

The neighborhood’s one-man cheer-leading squad, Ayooob was the owner of Four Star Video. Squat and smiling, colorfully dressed, Ayooob always tried to bring people together: merchants and customers, old timers and new arrivals, young dads with baby strollers and pierced teens in torn black jeans, gay men and St. Kevin’s parishioners (of which Ayooob was both).

Darcy Lee, current president of the

Merchants’ Association, said David fought for the benches because he wanted to “bring life to the corridor.” The benches, she explained, were David’s way of bringing back “old fashioned stoops” to Cortland, creating a place that “lends itself to camaraderie and community.”

Over the course of the last year, the benches have been transformed by the street. Some of the original benches – bought in haste – are a bit worn and battered by the elements. Some stores have replaced the original benches with ones of greater durability and molded green mesh seats much kinder to the sitter. Others have added benches with a little more personality, like the elegant knotted wood bench in front of Avedano’s, the self-described “ladies’ butcher shop,” or the one painted grass green in front of the Stray Bar.

More than anything, Ayooob wanted people—all kinds of people—to have a good time in his realm of Cortland Avenue, and the benches put up in his honor ensure that they do. The next time you pass one by, take a few minutes and enjoy one for yourself. ■

*A writer and editor who lives on Bernal, Elaine Elinson is currently working on a book on the history of civil liberties in California that will be published by Heyday Books next year.*



The benches in Bernal Heights are changing to match the character of the stores they sit outside.

top left: Stray Bar; to right: Avedano’s; left: Carol and Lindsey in front of Good Life Grocery



## “CULCHA” AT SOCHA

### Film, Music Featured at Local Cafe

Join us at Socha Café, located at 3235 Mission Street, on August 15 at 7pm, for a fifteen minute documentary by Joseph Smooke and non-profit documentary filmmaker Citizen Film! Created for a group called Neighborhood Centers Together, the film portrays the positive impacts neighborhood centers have on urban issues of poverty, hunger, housing, violence, and race here in San Francisco. The film will be followed by a musical performance by Two Tall Drinks. Hors d’oeuvres will be provided courtesy of SoCha.

Suggested donation: \$25, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Please contact Katixa Aboitiz at [kaboitiz@bhnc.org](mailto:kaboitiz@bhnc.org) or (415) 206-2140 x148 to let us know if you’re going to be there, or if you have any questions. ■

# CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO

## FALL SEMESTER BEGINS AUGUST 18TH



Space is still available in many courses this Fall semester at **City College of San Francisco’s Ocean Campus** located at 50 Phelan Avenue (corner of Ocean Ave.). Instruction begins August 18th. Credit courses are just \$20 per unit. See sampling below and/or visit [www.ccsf.edu](http://www.ccsf.edu)

### CREDIT COURSES

CRN #	Course Title	Days	Times	Room #
70158	African American Art History	TTh	9:30–11 AM	Visual Arts 115
78353	Air Cond & Refrigeration (Fund)	T	7–10 PM	Science 133
77786	Briefings in Biotechnology	W	4–6 PM	Science 200
73554	Career Success/Life Planning	TTh	12:30–2 PM	Cloud 229
76435	Color	TTh	12 NOON–3 PM	Art 103
75822	Comp Aided Drafting I	T	6–10 PM	Cloud 213
75821	Comp Aided Drafting I	W	6–10 PM	Cloud 203
78530	Demystifying the Middle East	MW	1–2:30 PM	Art Ext 181
78064	Documentary Tradition	M	6:30–9:30 PM	Visual Arts 114
70294	Drawing (Basic)	MW	6:30–9:30 PM	Art 103
78514	Early Childhood Admin	M	6–9 PM	20 Cook St.
75247	East Asian Lit in Film	T	2–5 PM	HC 214
75834	Elec Measure & Passive Circuit	T	6–10 PM	Science 47
78271	Emerging Diseases	W	1–4 PM	Science 302
78354	Engineered Plumbing Systems	Th	7–10 PM	Science 133
77852	Environmental Studies (Intro)	TTh	2:30–4 PM	Science 302
78272	Exploring Neuroscience	MW	12:30–2 PM	Science 309
70308	Figure Drawing (Advanced)	TTh	6:30–9:30 PM	Art 101
70302	Figure Drawing (Begin)	TTh	6:30–9:30 PM	Art 101
78061	Film History	Th	6–10 PM	Visual Arts 114
77228	Fine Art Itaglio Printmaking	TTh	12 NOON–3 PM	Visual Art 107
77227	Fine Art Printmaking	TTh	12 NOON–3 PM	Visual Art 107
77229	Fine Art Relief Printmaking	TTh	12 NOON–3 PM	Visual Art 107
77349	GIS (Intro)	M	6–9 PM	Cloud 203
74767	Illustration (Intro)	MW	12 NOON–3 PM	Art 103
74768	Illustration in Color	MW	12 NOON–3 PM	Art 103
76408	Islam (Intro)	T	6:30–9:30 PM	Art Ext 182
74662	Jazz & Other Popular Piano	MWF	11 AM–12 NOON	Arts 215
77442	Labor Drama Workshop	W	6:30-9:30 PM	Bungalow 712
78536	Labor Relations in Childcare	W	6:30–9:30 PM	Bungalow 702
77216	Latin Worker in Americas	MWF	10–11 AM	Bungalow 711
71539	Mfg Processes (Welding)	MW	6–9 PM	Science 4

CRN #	Course Title	Days	Times	Room #
73598	Mfg Processes (Welding)	Sat	9 AM–3 PM	Science 4
70354	Metal Arts (Begin, Interm, Adv)	MW	1–4 PM	Arts 126
70331	Monoprint (Begin)	MW	9 AM–12 NOON	Visual Art 107
76437	Monoprinting (Adv)	MW	9 AM–12 NOON	Visual Art 107
70332	Monoprinting (Interm)	MW	9 AM–12 NOON	Visual Art 107
77955	Nutrition (Elem)	TTh	2:30–4 PM	Science 300
73682	Observing Young Children	M	6:20–9:20 PM	3151 Ortega St.
76139	Orientation to Education	Th	6–9 PM	Batmale 203
76534	Pacific Islanders	Th	6:30–9:30 PM	Batmale 222
71979	Philippine Humanities	TTh	9:30–11 AM	Batmale 321
72681	Piano (Begin)	M	7–10 PM	Arts 215
78311	Pilipino (Conversational)	Th	4–7 PM	Arts Ext 187
77495	Poetry for the People	Th	6:30–9:30 PM	Art Ext 181
78405	Programming with Online Data	W	3–6 PM	Batmale 453
77472	Secondary Sup Field Exp	M	6–9 PM	Batmale 203
72740	SF Opera Previews	W	12–3 PM	Arts 135
72767	Stage Band	T	7–10 PM	Arts 132
76732	Technical Drawing (Intro)	W	6–9 PM	Science 143
76724	Technical Drawing (Intro)	Th	6–9 PM	Science 143
74857	United Nations (Intro)	W	6:30–9:30 PM	Cloud 222
72710	Voice (Singing, Interm.)	TTh	9:30–11 AM	Arts 133
72810	Watercolor Painting (Adv)	TTh	9 am–12 NOON	Visual Art 102
72802	Watercolor Painting (Intro)	TTh	9 am–12 NOON	Visual Art 102
77222	Western Art History	T	2–5 PM	Visual Arts 115
73258	Woodwinds	M	1–4 PM	Arts 135
77217	Working People’s History	MWF	11 AM–12 NOON	Statler Wing 2

### CREDIT SHORT TERM COURSES

CRN #	Course Title	Days	Times	Dates	Room#
70403	Asian Humanities	W	1–4:30 PM	Starts 9/3	Art 309
78483	Bird Illustration	W	6-9 PM	10/1–10/29	Science 310
78344	Career Success	W	1–3 PM	9/10-10/29	Cloud 115
78536	Childcare Worker Rights	W	6:30-9:30 PM	9/3-10/8	Bungalow 702

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 415.452.5101 OR VISIT [WWW.CCSF.EDU](http://WWW.CCSF.EDU)



THE REAL DEAL: NOTES FROM CORTLAND

By Darcy Lee

Wow, summer in the city. I love this foggy weather. I know warm summer nights are lush and sort of soothing and we don't really get them, but those warm summer days are a lot to deal with and I prefer this cool morning. Remember Pollyanna? She got a crutch instead of a doll and she learned to discover how to be thankful for what she has rather than constantly looking for more. (You can rent this movie at 4 Star, check it out!) I think of it as ten years of therapy in a

Of blogs, brains, and new business associations

single movie. I didn't make that up—Daniel Amen did. He is one of those spokespersons who gets a gig on public television, raises money for the station, and gets a ton of publicity. I listened to his DVDs on brain chemistry as I have been plagued with random anxiety all my life—which is not the topic of this article, but one of my favorite *help others out topic* so ask me if you have questions. My email is [info@heartfeltsf.com](mailto:info@heartfeltsf.com). I am also blogging (I hate to use that word) but it is really fun: come check it out at [www.heartfeltsf.com/blog/](http://www.heartfeltsf.com/blog/)

What is the topic of this column is some exciting news: due to some sort of mundane technical difficulties the Cortland Merchants Association has dissolved. We are reforming and are calling ourselves the Bernal Business Alliance (or BBA for short). We are reducing the dues and making the organization avail-

able to all small business on the hill. Please email me or drop your info by the store if you are interested in joining—this organization will include all business run in Bernal, even if they are from a home office. Also, we will also have a booth at Fiesta on the Hill, so stop by and see what we are all about. Big thanks to Mark Tetrault, Lester Ziedman, Amy Shelf and Ken Shelf—they have helped to form this new group and we all look forward to new members, new energy, and new accomplishments in 2008, 2009, and beyond.

One of my favorite summer events is the Bernal Outdoor Cinema. The screening schedule is:

- Thursday 8/28 • El Rio 7-9 pm  
Opening Night
- Friday 8/29 • 4 Star Video 8-10 pm  
Special Feature
- Saturday 8/30 • Red Hill Books 1-2:30  
\*\*Children's Film\*\*

- Saturday 8/30 • Holly Park  
5pm – Music  
6pm – Meet the Filmmakers  
7:30pm – Films
- Sunday 8/31 • Precita Park  
5pm – Music  
6pm – Meet the Filmmakers  
7:30pm – Youth Filmworks

Please join the new business association, be aware of your neighborhood, call the police if something strikes you as suspicious, and form a block association. Good bye, neighbor Ju Ju, may you rest in peace. And Norma Elisa Silva, also from my block, good bye and rest quietly as well. And thanks, Paul Silva, for being the best neighbor one could ever have.

—with caring, d

RACING DADS RAISE MONEY FOR LIBRARY



STEPHAN ZUERCHER



Pelted with lemons. Poisoned by exhaust fumes. Threatened with tar and feathering. Aided by a group called "Team Size Matters." Forced to watch *Superbad* on hotel pay-per-view. These were only some of the dangers a courageous crew of Bernal Dads braved to raise more than \$3,500 dollars for Friends of San Francisco Public Library at Altamont's "24 Hours of LeMons," an endurance race weekend for cars costing \$500 or less. (Although to be fair, Team Size Matters was very helpful and everyone agreed *Superbad* was very funny.)

Sponsored in part by Stray Bar, Home San Francisco, Chloe's Closet, Martha & Bros. on Cortland, The Good Life Grocery, Four Star Video, IPD, and @ Signs, this year's group—Brandon Powell, Fiid Williams, Stephan Zuercher, Thomas Ulrich, Robert Freedman and Mason Kirby—was a mixture of old, road-battered salts who had previously raced at the Altamont track and young inexperienced also-salts who had not. Whatever the exact proportion of old to new salt, something obviously clicked as Team Bernal Dads Racing finished 28th out of 89 participants. Intrepid souls staunch enough to handle the adventure can read Brandon Powell's online journal of the event at: [www.bernardads.org/LeMons%E2%80%9494Altamont\\_2008.html](http://www.bernardads.org/LeMons%E2%80%9494Altamont_2008.html).

Congratulations to Team Bernal Dads for an impressive showing!





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## Letter from Supervisor Tom Ammiano

We are currently in the midst of facilitating a community process to address issues around the development of the South Slope of Bernal Hill, a mostly grassy area increasingly targeted for development. Please contact my office at 554-5144 if you would like to learn more. ■

# ON SALE

## ...at The Good Life Grocery



**Clover Dairy**  
Organic Milk Gallons  
128 oz. -reg 6.99

**\$5.99**



Organic Cottage Cheese  
16 oz. -reg 4.29

**\$3.49**



Organic Butter  
sweet or salted  
16 oz. -reg 5.99

**\$4.99**



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4 oz. -reg 9.99

**\$6.99**



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Organic Dark French  
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BULK! -reg 8.49 lb.

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Ultra Liquid  
Laundry Detergent  
50 oz. -reg 6.99 +tx

**\$3.99**



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4 pk -reg 2.29 +tx

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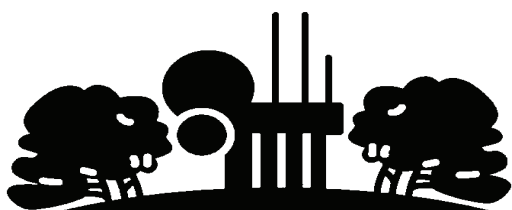
Herb and Emilia were longtime members of the St. Mary's Park Improvement Club: Herb designed the flag for St.

Aloha, Herb. ■

**March 27, 1918 – June 11, 2008**



Now rejoining her beloved husband, Bill—may they both rest in peace. ■



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Kristin

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|---------------|-----------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
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| ___ \$50-99   | Supporting Membership       | ___ \$500  | Neighborhood Center Sustainer |
| ___ \$100-249 | Neighborhood Center Friend  | ___ \$1000 | Neighborhood Center Sponsor   |
| ___ \$1       | Youth Membership (under 18) | ___ \$5    | Seniors/Low-income Membership |
|               |                             | ___ \$     | Other                         |

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone-day	Telephone-evening
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E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

My employer has a matching gift program. A corporate matching form is enclosed.

Name of employer \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I am interested in learning about volunteer opportunities.

☐ I am interested in learning about Planned Giving opportunities.

☐ I have remembered the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center in my will.

## Other Ways You Can Help!

- Make a United Way Donor Choice gift. Just fill in BHNC's code #928683 on the United Way pledge form.
- For federal workers, the Combined Federal Campaign is the program through which you designate your United Way gift.
- Multiply your gift with a matching contribution from your employer.
- Donate used items to our thrift store, Gifts on the Hill, 513 Cortland
- Donate resale items to Community Thrift Store, Valencia between 17th and 18th Streets, and designate BHNC (acct# 243) as the beneficiary.
- When you shop at Cole Hardware, Mission and 29th Street, tell them you want BHNC (acct# 515) to get 10% from your purchase.
- Consider including the BHNC in your estate planning. Call (415) 206-2140 x161 to discuss how.

**Return to: Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center**  
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